An Overview of Alberta Farmers' Markets

Farm-fresh products, friendly people, and a return to a relaxed, slightly old-fashioned kind of shopping ... just a few of the joys of shopping at an Alberta Farmers' Market.

In less than three years, Farmers' Markets have become a lively part of life in rural Alberta. In the words of one market manager, they're "the greatest thing since cornflakes."

The Growth of Markets in Alberta

Unlike British Columbia and some eastern provinces, Alberta has not traditionally been a province where consumers could buy produce directly from the farmer at roadside stands or Farmers' Markets. Until two years ago, there were only four Farmers' Markets in Alberta, all privately owned, located in Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton.

In the spring of 1973, however, things started to change. The provincial department of agriculture (Alberta Agriculture), noting the popularity of Farmers' markets in other provinces, took a survey to see whether markets might succeed here. Consumers were immediately enthusiastic. Many expressed a desire for food in as natural a state as possible, without unnecessary packaging. They also voiced concern for the environment, and said they would like to help small, independent farmers. All these things pointed to Farmers' Markets.

In October 1973, Alberta Agriculture announced a program to aid the development of Farmers' Markets. This program is still in effect. It provides grants of up to $10,000 for each market. Half of this money is to be used for building or renovating market facilities; the other half is intended to pay for organizational and promotional expenses. These grants are not paid in lump sums; rather, funds are allocated to each market, and as the market develops, the organizers receive cheques to cover specific expenses. While the department has set no rigid guidelines, it suggests that each Farmers' Market will need a trading area with a population of 5,000. It also recommends that produce sold at markets should be of high quality. Organizers of Farmers' Markets may be individuals or groups. The latter includes auction markets, agricultural societies, town and municipal councils and exhibition associations.

Response to the announced Farmers' Market program came quickly from all parts of Alberta. In 1974, the first full season, 16 markets opened. By 1975, the number of Farmers' Markets reached 35, more than double the first season. To date (late September 1975), Alberta Agriculture has received 95 enquiries from groups interested in establishing markets.

The Farmers' Market program is administered by a committee composed of department of agriculture staff. This committee will help market organizers by attending a community meeting to explain the program, or conducting a survey to determine the potential for a market. Committee members are available to help markets in specific areas: market facilities, health regulations, publicity ideas, vegetable production and consumer matters.

The committee also carries out province-wide promotion for Farmers' Markets. It has selected a colorful market symbol featuring Sunny, the Farmers' Market girl, indicating the friendly spirit of Alberta Farmers' Markets. The committee provides markets with roadside signs, shopping bags, stickers, and other promotional items. In 1975, Farmers' Markets were publicized through a brochure distributed from Travel Alberta booths. In March, the committee sponsored a one-day seminar at which Farmers' Market managers exchanged ideas and shared problems, and a similar event is being planned for next year. The committee also prepared a newsletter to circulate items of general interest.

The main responsibility for organizing and managing each market, however, rests with each sponsoring group. Aside from some regulations of the Provincial Board of Health, organizers have a free hand in developing each market. Day-to-day operating decisions and the overall character of each market will be determined by each managing group and it is the unique quality of each market that adds to its appeal.

A Trip Through the Markets

Visit some of the Farmers' Markets in Alberta and you'll find many differences. A few, like Calgary's Agri-Mart, are located in new, very modern facilities. Other markets are housed in community halls or other existing buildings. Still others operate outdoors, and even the odd rainstorm doesn't dampen the enthusiasm of the stallholders and customers!

Days and hours of operation vary somewhat, too. Most markets are open one day a week from late spring to late fall, reaching a peak in August as most produce becomes available. There are, however, several markets which operate only occasionally each year.

The goods for sale at Farmers' Markets are basically the same throughout Alberta. Vegetables are the largest seller by volume. Produce suitable for freezing, canning and pickling is very popular. Most markets also offer eggs, honey, mushrooms, berries, fruit, baked goods and home preserves. Non-food items include house plants, bedding plants, cut flowers, antiques, used books and local handicrafts ranging from candles to raw wool. Craft demonstrations are held in conjunction with some market days. Seasonal items like Halloween pumpkins or Christmas trees are sometimes featured.

Stallholders at Farmers' Markets often include youth, church and 4-H groups as well as Hutterites and other farmers. There is usually a nominal charge for stall and truck space to help cover operating costs.

A word about price and quality ... shoppers who go to a Farmers' Market expecting produce to be "dirt cheap" are in for a surprise. Although substantial

savings are sometimes possible, particularly by buying in bulk, most vegetable prices are close to retail level. That fact does not matter to many regular shoppers, who maintain that the "farm freshness" and high quality of the vegetables sold at markets makes them well worth the price.

In the past, produce sold at Farmers' Markets in Alberta has been of consistently high quality, although vegetables sold in this manner do not have to be graded.

The People

Much of the color and success of Farmers' Markets is due to the people involved in them.

The Organizer — Behind every successful market is ONE enthusiastic individual. That has been the experience so far in Alberta. It is this "sparkplug" who calls a meeting of interested community groups, forms a Farmers' Market committee and assigns responsibilities.

In planning a market, the organizers should remember that people who shop there like a rustic atmosphere, which can be provided through the use of lots of wood and warm, earthy colors like yellows, browns and greens. At the same time, great care should be taken to have all surfaces as clean as possible. Refrigeration facilities are an asset. Stallholders should be well aware of health regulations, as they protect both sellers and customers.

To get the market off to a rousing start, the opening market day should be well advertised. Ads in the local paper, posters, radio coverage and large, easily-read signs will all help.

The Stallholders — There's no doubt that raising vegetables to sell at a Farmers' Market is a great deal of work, requiring much time and effort. However, there are several big advantages: First, running a stall at a Farmers' Market can be a family enterprise that provides some extra cash over the summer months. Most stallholders are market gardeners with less than three acres of vegetables, so out-of-pocket expenses are low. Most important, perhaps, is that selling at a Farmers' Market gives a producer exposure to a large number of potential customers. Many will buy regularly, perhaps directly from the farm. Finally, hours of operation at a Farmers' Market are limited, usually not more than five in one day, so unlike at a roadside stand, the actual selling occupies relatively little time.

Dennis Moffat, manager of the Red Deer market, estimates that some serious farmer-stallholders take in as much as $5,000 to $9,000 in one season. Non-food items can also be quite profitable. One female stallholder turned her hobby of raising houseplants into a money-making venture, selling enough in one year to make the mortgage payments on her home.

Stallholders themselves can add much to the character of the market, particularly if they take time to chat with customers, and offer suggestions for using the goods they're selling.

The Consumers — Ask why they shop at Farmers' Markets, and you'll get answers like these:
"The produce is so fresh! You **know** it's just been picked the same day."
"Shopping at a Farmers' Market is personal and friendly, a real change from going to the supermarket!"
"I'm a bargain hunter, and I just can't stay away from Farmers' Markets. Last week I found some home-made soap — beautiful! Where else could you buy anything like that?"

Those statements help explain why consumers are often lined up outside the market before it opens. For many, shopping at a Farmers' Market involves making a special trip, but they return regularly!

The Community — The benefits of a Farmers' Market often extend to local merchants. A successful market brings people into town ready to spend money, and consequently complements rather than competes with other businesses. In some areas, retailers are among the strongest supporters of the markets.

Over all, a Farmers' Market adds a new dimension to a town. It brings together urban and rural people and can become a tourist attraction, again to the benefit of all merchants.

An Overview

Surveys taken elsewhere in Canada and the United States show that 70 per cent of shoppers at Farmers' Markets are under 30. Farmers' Markets offer producers alternative means of marketing produce and an opportunity to build up a regular clientele. For consumers, they are a return to the more relaxed, personalized type of shopping that people enjoyed in times past. They are also a link with rural Alberta. Finally, Farmers' Markets generate traffic in a town's business district, indirectly increasing sales for local merchants.

If you haven't already done so, take time to visit a Farmers' Market in Alberta and see it first hand! A warm welcome awaits you!

For more information about Alberta Farmers' Markets, contact:

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This report was compiled by members of the Alberta Agriculture Farmers' Market Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR FARMERS' MARKET

In order to be a success, managers of a farmers' market should consider the following: the market should be clean and modern and yet maintain a rustic, fresh, wholesome image; it should offer top quality products and as wide a variety of goods as possible; it should be staffed by rural people; and should be distinctly different from conventional supermarkets — bulk displays from which shoppers can buy by the pound or piece are preferable. Advertising the products and prices should be done through radio, newspapers and T.V. if possible, as well as a large information board outside the market. Promote your "farm fresh" image.

Some of the following are optional but might be highly profitable.

1. **Refrigeration** facilities for merchandising perishable products.
2. An **information booth** for advise on product use and to introduce new Alberta products.
3. Activities for **children** since the farmers' market shopping day is a family affair.
4. A **food bar** serving regional or ethnic specialty.

Effective operating procedures, combined with sufficient supply and demand and adequate facilities are all necessary for the success of future farmers' markets.

Evaluating Your Market

Aftre your market is planned consider your set-up through the light of the following suggestions:

Appearance - Displays full and inviting
Color contrast
Variety
Adequate lighting
Early shoppers having adequate selection

Cleanliness — Floors, displays, parking lot, product itself

Convenience — Aisle space, loading area, easily reached displays, ease of parking

Merchandising — Feature display, products identified and priced

Signs to suggest serving ideas — Taste testing, samples, recipes particularly for uncommon items.

Service — People enjoy their work, special services, prompt service, clerks efficient and out of the way, courteous and cheerful, well groomed, neat, clean aprons.

Quality — Grading where there is an advantage; temperatures low enough; culls removed; green vegetables moist.

Value — Prices clearly marked, fair and competitive; sales units posted; sizes separated for pricing; high-value, seasonal items featured.

TO THE MANAGEMENT

Never before has the opportunity been so great to sell to the mobile Canadian shopper. The Farmers' Market serves as a meeting place, a facility where stallholders, sponsors and consumers can get together.

Successful Farmers' Markets have some things in common; top quality produce, farmers doing the selling, and an informal farm atmosphere. In order to have return customers, you must keep them happy with your product, your price and your whole atmosphere. Product appearance, cleanliness of the market, freshness of the product, price, display, convenience of location, ease of access from the highway are all important.

In order to be a success you need the support of your whole community. You might consider having your market on a town-owned parking lot supported by local merchants, operated or managed by your service clubs. Spaces or stalls could be allocated to individuals or organizations or villages in the vicinity.

It only takes a few extra hours of planning to save many extra hours of labor and effort. A well-planned Farmers' Market provides greater capacity for handling customers, higher sales per customer and greater total sales. If you are going to do the job any way you might as well do it right the first time.

Setting Up the Farmers' Market

The executive should be aware of any legal restrictions which might be involved; zoning, grading, weights and measures, etc. There may be building permits and various operational licenses to obtain. (See attached health regulation guidelines.) Get as many local authorities on your committee as you can at the beginning; this will save time and trouble later — the zoning, planning board, highways, licensing, fire and police, building inspector, etc. Make it a community affair and include some of the local retailers, the radio station or local paper, and your downtown merchants. After all, a Farmers' Market can bring a lot of business into town on Saturday (you could even close a few hours early so people can shop other places. There's nothing like good community relations!) Avoid problems later and involve your local health unit as well. When your Farmers' Market committee has been formed, set up your by-laws in contract form.

Selecting a Site

Ideally your site should be close to suppliers, in the country, close to a major highway and/or near a resort. It helps to conduct a simple traffic survey in the vicinity of your farmers' market location. Just count the number of cars going past, the speed at which they are travelling and where they're from. It is interesting to note that really busy highways are not very good places for farmers' markets because people do not want to stop or get off and back on to the road.

If the farmers' market is going to be located on the outskirts of town, it should be seen with plenty of time to stop. Long level stretches or on the outside of broad curves are the best, never on the inside of curves or on hilly areas. You don't want anything to obstruct the view (woods, embankments, buildings or billboards). The better the view, the better the business. An inviting appearance showing good quality and good selection makes people stop.

Signs

When deciding where to place your signs, you must consider the significant effect of rate of speed. You must have enough time to stop safely and conveniently. This means you need signs a good distance away from your market. Consider the following information:

mph	Stopping Distance
20	43'
30	80'
40	128'
50	186'

Facilities

Farmers' market facilities range from permanent, semi-permanent to temporary, where produce is sold from rear of trucks, table tops, and benches. But just because facilities are temporary doesn't mean they shouldn't be well planned. In order to be successful, markets should be planned from the inside out and they will be neater, better organized and as a result more profitable.

A good market layout saves time and effort of everyone involved and customers quickly find what they want. A plan should be flexible and adaptable to anticipated changes, should maximize sales and minimize selling cost. A clear paved or gravelled open space that can be used for both parking and sales and buildings with clear interiors (so there are no expensive structural changes ever necessary) are desirable. There should be ample aisle space (5 - 7 feet) and aisles should run parallel to the direction of entry. An even number of aisles allows the customer to come back to the point of entry without back tracking or avoiding aisles. There should be lots of counter space. Remember the customer's reach is about two feet; so plan your display modules accordingly. Demand items and best-sellers should be placed far apart in the market to encourage thorough shopping of the whole market area. After you are set up the first few times, do a customer flow analysis. That is, follow customers around and see which parts of the markets they do not visit, then rearrange your stalls to the best advantage. (This can be done by sampling 100 customers at different times). It helps you locate bottlenecks. Since most fresh fruit and vegetables are bought on impulse, (that is the decision is made right at the market) all products must be readily seen.

Even if the area of your Farmers' Market is small, don't be discouraged; surveys among successful Farmers' Markets in the U.S. indicate that a sales area of 800 square feet can have a sales volume of $60,000 or more. After your first year of operation, consider calculating sales per square foot for each type of merchandise offered. This will help you determine which merchandise deserves more space and which should be cut down. You can make recommendations to your producers.

Special Facilities and Equipment

The following are some additional facilities and equipment that would be useful if space and money permit. A working area which should perhaps include scales, knives, refuse cans which are tightly covered to minimize insects, crate hammers, a sink and sprayer and perhaps a refrigeration and storage space. In this area the producers could wash, trim, sort, store and package their produce. Wheel carts would be handy for moving the produce to the market floor. A separate service drive and entrance would make it easier to restock during heavy customer traffic and should be considered; it is also less inconvenient to the customer. Also in the general area of the Farmers' Market, you might consider supplying a couple of adding machines and perhaps accurate, legal customer scales, because many customers like to check weights, even if the produce is not being sold by the pound.

All the equipment you are considering buying doesn't have to be new. One market bought a used refrigerated milk truck body from a local dairy to use as their cold storage unit. Use your creativity!

Hours and Season

Many farmers' markets extend their season both in the spring and the fall with flowers, shrubs, and garden supplies. These greatly increased profits. Surveys have shown that after school starts, traffic decreases; however Halloween and Thanksgiving are good closing dates. Be sure to have a sign up telling people when your opening and closing dates are. This avoids annoyance and confusion on the part of customers.

The largest volume of business is done on the weekends and some say Sundays are the best. I fyou are interested in Sunday Farmers' Markets be sure you check your local by-laws to see if this is possible. As far as hours are concerned, there is much debate. Many people feel that in the summertime, evening business is critical, because shopping patterns of people in the cities have changed and there is always traffic on the road at nine or ten o'clock at night. The advocates of evening hours suggest you open at 11:00 a.m. and go till dark. You might like to close early so people will have time to shop at the other local businesses. This is great public relations with your local retailers.

If you are considering night-time selling, contact the lighting specialist with your local power company to help you plan your lighting. A selling area needs about 100-150 foot candles. During the day time there is no problem because bright sunlight has 10,000 foot candles, open shade 1,000 and moderatley dense shade 500. But at night effective illumination is critical, particularly in your praking area and exerior of any building.

PARKING

A Farmers' Market parking lot can be important to its success. The essentials for any parking lot are safe entry and exit, good drainage, and lots of room.

It's best to locate a parking lot at the side of the market, if possible, to avoid obscuring the visual appeal of sales areas that can be seen from the road. perpendicular or 90 degree parking is the most effective, since the aisles permit two way traffic, and are less of an obstacle course for the driver. Allow ten feet of width by twenty feet of depth for each space, with a 30 foot wide aisle. This means about 400 square feet per car.

Entrances and exits should be well marked, (with thirty feet width allowed for one-way traffic), at least twenty feet apart, and not located within 100 feet of an intersection. This will reduce the possibility of accidents, and of would-be customers overshooting the entrance. Good visibility and clearly marked signs are essential.

How many spaces to provide will be determined by the size of your market. Generally, allow 15 spaces for each 100 customer cars you expect per day; one parking space for each $1000 in sales; or five time sthe sales area of the market. For rush times, perhaps weekends, you might consider overflow parking as well, with a less expensive surface than the main lot.

Gravel is recommended as surfacing for Farmers' Market lots, and railway ties or telephone poles can be used as curbs and dividers. Curbs should be at least four and a half feet from buildings or other obstacles to allow for overhang, etc. For painted marking lines, yellow stripes three or four inches wide are the most visible.

For good drainage, hard surfaced lots require a slope of one to three percent in the direction in which cars are parked. The slope across the space may be up to five percent.

For extra convenience for your customers, plan a special loading area where they can put heavier and bulkier purcheses into their cars.

Most important of all, consult local authorities on design regulations before you start planning. Any time after that is too late!

MARKET SIGNS

Good signs are probably the cheapest and most effective method of advertising. An advance road sign's appearance and content is extremely important since this is the first impression many of the customers will get. Signs should be brief, simple, colorful, and carefully located. In an Ohio survey, 75 percent of customers at a Farmers' Market indicated they discovered the market through highway signs.

Give your market a distinctive name, logo, or trademark tht makes it unique — a large red apple, an old farm tractor, or antiques, perhaps. Use the sumbol on highway signs, signs in the market itself, and on stationery so customers remember it.

Avoid using blackboards, soft drink signs, or flashy flourescent signs. They give the impression of a cheap dirty market, and they're often hard to read. Repaint signs every three years at least. Faded or damaged signs imply a poorly managed operation.

Some of the best colors for signs are: black lettering on white, orange or yellow; yellow-orange on navy-blue; green on white; and scarlet on white.

Don't mention prices on road signs — this attracts bargain hunters, not the seekers of quality produce you want to attract. Stress quality by the sign's appearance and restrained message. Don't use an "open" sign — it implies the market isn't always open, therefore not successful.

Keep information brief. The customer should be able to read the sign in about three seconds. Listing your products on separate removable signs is very effective. Keep them up-to-date — leaving the sign out without having the product is a quick way to lose customers.

Pictures of the fruit or vegetable on each sign, without lettering, is decorative and highly effective.

Don't use more than two sizes or styles of lettering on a sign. Locate it perpendicular, not parallel to the road, on an outside curve where allowable. Make sure it's never in shade or obscured by trees, grass, or buildings.

Signs should be well in advance of the market on the highway, at least 300 feet, and ideally 1200 feet. This gives the driver time to pull over safely. Indicate distances in tenths of a mile so the driver can check his odometer.

This table indicates size of lettering and number of words that can be read by a person with 20:20 vision and 200 words per minute comprehension.

CONTENT, AND LETTER SIZE OF ROADSIDE MARKET SIGNS UNDER VARIOUS CONDITIONS OF VISIBILITY

Maximum number of words which can be read by motorist				Distance from which signs must be visible to be read	Minimum Letter Height	*Minimum Letter Width
30 mph	40 mph	50 mph	60 mph	Feet	Inches	Inches
4	2	1	0	50	1¾	5/16
8	5	4	3	100	3½	11/16
15	11	8	6	200	7	1⅜
22	16	13	10	300	11	2
30	22	17	14	400	14	2¾
38	28	22	18	500	17½	3½

* Letter width should be approximately 1/5 the height of the letter.

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
ABOUT FARMERS' MARKET PUBLIC HEALTH LAWS

The following questions and answers represent the highlights of requirements and are for your general information. For more detail you should contact your Local Health Unit.

QUESTION: What Alberta **health regulations** apply to the sale of food in Farmers' Markets?

ANSWER: The Provincial Board of Health Regulations Respecting Food and Drink contain sections which apply to Farmers' Markets. Some of the essential requirements are summarized here. For more detailed information on the regulations and their application to you as a food vendor in a Farmers' Market you should contact your Local Health Unit.

QUESTION: How do I contact my **local Health Unit**?

ANSWER: If you do not know the address or telephone number of your Local Health Unit the Secretary-Treasurer of your Town, Village, County or Municipal District should be able to provide this information.

QUESTION: Would the regulations **apply** to me as a vendor one or two days per week?

ANSWER: Yes, the regulations would apply to everyone in pertinent categories, however, as a vendor you would find that the regulations would be an asset to you in yourbidto offer safe products to the public.

QUESTION: Would the regulations prove **expensive** to comply with?

ANSWER: The cost of compliance is directly related to the types and range of foods to be offered.

QUESTION: Is **open display** of foods allowed?

ANSWER: Only vegetables, fresh fruits, wrapped, canned or sealed bottled foods would be allowed on open display.

QUESTION: As a vendor of vegetables and fresh fruits only, can I store or display them **on the ground** around my stall?

ANSWER: No. All foods must be stored or displayed at a sufficient height whereby animals will not have access to them.

QUESTION: I know that regular food businesses must **refrigerate** or keep hot certain foods. Would this rule apply to me as a vendor and what foods would be involved?

ANSWER: The ruling requiring the refrigerating or the keeping of foods hot applies to everyone offering perishable foods such as meat, poultry, eggs, fish, dairy products and the like. These foods must be kept at a temperature of less than 40 degrees Fahrenheit or above 140 degrees Fahrenheit depending on the particular commodity.

QUESTION: Are there any requirements as **to dress** and appearance of vendors on duty?

ANSWER: Vendors should be dressed in clean washable clothing, be cleanly in their habits and person, refrain from smoking and have hair under proper control.

QUESTION: What materials are acceptable in **stall construction**?

ANSWER: Materials should be durable, impervious to water and easily cleaned, e.g. table or counter tops should be covered with arborite, lino or plasticized, etc.

QUESTION: Can a **mobile trailer** be used as a stall?

ANSWER: Provided it is properly equipped and fitted for the purpose at hand.

There are many more questions to be answered but the ones answered here are probably the most common to be expected at the onset and this presentation is intended to supply only initial information.

BYLAWS FOR FARMERS' MARKETS

Every group which sponsors Farmers' Market sooner or later must look into the problem of bylaws and regulations governing its operation. Each market will be different and no-one can recommend the exact number of bylaws which will be necessary in your case.

The bylaws regulating the City of Hamilton Farmers' Market are summarized below for your interest. Perhaps some of them will be applicable in your case. The bylaws contain:

— a legal description of where the market is located, a definition of market hours: 2:30 in the afternoon til 6:00 on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

— defines the city council sub-committee that is responsible and the market manager who is appointed and collects the fees. He is responsible for all administration and enforcement of bylaws with the exception of health regulations.

— defines what may be sold.

— defines who may sell. A person who produces at least two-thirds of what he sells. Licence available either for 6 months from July 1 to December 31 or for the whole year. Rent is paid monthly in advance. The stand must be occupied before 9:00 in the morning.

— defines what must be refrigerated. Fresh meat and fresh fish. Also eviscerated poultry and rabbit must be kept continually not over 40° F. Pastry and home-baked goods must be covered and kept at the same temperature. Cheddar cheese must be cured for at least six days and any other cheese must be pasteurized or made from pasteurized milk.

— stall holders must leave their stalls clear and clean by 6:30 in the afternoon. A sign must be available that bears the producer's name and address and must be at least three inches high.

— miscellaneous regulations — nothing will be sold at auction; no handbills will be passed out; no unnecessary noise; all products must be unloaded by 10:00 am.

FARMERS' MARKET HEALTH GUIDELINES

1. PERMITS

The market management must obtain a "Food Suppliers Permit" from the Local Board of Health. This single permit would validate the entire market operation for a specified period, unless revoked by the Health Authority. Market managers will monitor stallholders and when necessary, specifically refer them to the Local Health Authority for further scrutiny.

2. BUILDINGS

Farmers' Market organizations committees and individual stallholders will be responsible to create environments proper to the display of the foods being offered. The market building as such becomes secondary. This will help to preserve the traditional Farmers' Market atmosphere in keeping with the government's intent. A variety of buildings may be used, some of which might not otherwise be acceptable for the sale of food. In some instances it may be reasonable to use parking lots, etc. for the location of stalls.

Every Farmers' Market should be required to have adequate facilities to perform clean-up operations.

3. WASHROOMS

It would appear to be a reasonable requirement that washroom facilities be available for the use of stallholders. These may either be provided by the market management or available through agreement.

4. EQUIPMENT FOR STALLS

Equipment for stalls offering basically garden produce, arts and crafts items, etc. need only be a basic nature. Counters should preferably be covered with impervious or suitable material.

5. PROHIBITED FOODS

All meat, fish and poultry must be obtained from inspected or approved sources. It should be noted that the sale of 'farm slaughtered meat' is not permitted. The requirements respecting meat inspection do not presently apply to 'New York Dressed' poultry. Stallholders offering meat, fish and poultry must provide protection from the possibility of customer handling and contamination together with the provision of temperature control. In most instances the food supplies will be in stalls for limited periods of time, almost certainly less than one day. It is proper then to keep this factor in mind in the consideration of temperature control. Chipped ice would usually be acceptable for the display of fish and poultry. An exemption to the temperature control requirements would be the offering of whole raw shell eggs.

6. PREPARED FOODS

Prepared foods may be offered with the exception of home canned vegetables, those containing meat, or containing dairy products as the main ingredient. Items which are prepared using no preservatives shall be offered in a frozen state and maintained at a temperature of 40° F or less.

7. MILK

Only milk and milk products from registered premises may be sold. It should be noted that milk products would include items such as butter, cream, cottage cheese, yogurt and the like. Where a compulsory pasteurization bylaw is in effect, it will apply.

8. HOME BAKED GOODS

Home baked items such as bread, buns and cookies can be offered; however, here again it should be noted that under no circumstances will baked items prone to food poisoning be allowed, that is, items such as cream pies, cream eclairs and custard cakes, etc. It is essential that stallholders intending to offer baked goods clarify with the market management exactly the items to be allowed. Again, sanctioned baked goods must be fully protected from customer handling and contamination — for example: saran wrap, plastic bags, etc.

9. HOLDOVER OF GOODS

The holdover or storage of food on the market premises after a market day should not be permitted, unless proper facilities for this purpose are provided.

10. HOUSEKEEPING

Good standards of housekeeping should be expected. All foods should be displayed on clean counters (bearing in mind the nature of the food). All stalls should be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each business day. An adequate number of refuse containers should be provided throughout the market area. The market management should be required to arrange garbage and refuse removal service as soon as practical after each business day.

THINKING ABOUT BEING A SUPPLIER TO THE FARMERS'S MARKET

Producers should ask themselves:

1. Will selling through a farmers' market fit into my type of farm operation?
2. Will it add sufficient income to the family to warrant my participation?
3. Are the people who will be involved in my family aware of the time involved?
4. Do we have enough man-power?
5. Do we have the ability and desire to meet and service the public?
6. Will we be able to offer some variety? For the whole season? (This may not be necessary)

Advantages

Easy to start
Low capital investment
Family employment
Additonal "cash" income
Outlet for surplus production
Seasonal
Establishing clientele for future farm-gate purchase
Broad exposure

Disadvantages

Long hours
Uncertainty of weather
Subject to certain laws, regulations, etc.

What does it take? An investment of time and efforh on your part! Actual out-ofpocket costs are low and include the expense of seed and fertilizer, perhaps pesticides and stall rental. Of course you will have to determine your own operating costs and evaluate them. It is very good to keep records of what you sell of each item. Next year you will have the information to make your decisions. These records should be kept separate from other farm business and personal finances, and be sure to list all expenses.

You may wonder how much money you can expect to get as a producer. The first year, of course, sales will not be fantastic but each year customers return if the market is run properly. In some cases newer markets have found that sales have doubled in a single two-year period. After a few years in operation, one reported clearing $200,000 on a single Saturday with thirty-five to forty stall holders. That's an awful lot of money per producer. Over the long haul, however, net returns for individual stallholders range up to $5.24/hr. This is based on all expenses being deducted including interest charges on total investment and labor. An average yearly income that a stallholder could expect over a three to six month summer period is around $8,000.

The typical farmer has become quite accustomed to solving production problems, but selling through a farmers' market offers a challenge. He'll now be called upon to solve problems involving merchandising, quality control and customer service. It's quite a change.

Perhaps the new producer should start off in a small way the first year, learning the fundamentals of the business gradually and keeping initial capital investment to a minimum. He should see how it goes. Of course the extra income is attractive and he is able to obtain a better net return than if his produce was sold to wholesalers, etc.

YOU AND YOUR PRODUCERS

In the early stages of setting up your Farmers' Market, your producers should be one of your most important considerations. Experience has shown that often the limiting factor in total sales is the availability of produce. The seed catalogues have arrived; the time is now!

You will have to determine the number of potential suppliers and the variety of products available on a continuing basis. Ifyouhave done **a preliminary survey** in your area, such as the one enclosed, you should have a list of interested producers. Perhaps your next step should be a phone call. (If possible, appoint a couple of your committeemen to keep in close contact with your producers.) Be friendly; remember, that's what a Farmers' Market is all about. Talk to him. Tell him how little money he need invest. He or his wife already have their own garden, so suggest that they order just a little more seed and invest a little more time and come to the market. If he hesitates over an all-summer-long commitment, reassure him. Perhaps suggest that he and a few neighbours get together and have one booth. If you think he might be a large supplier, mention the Market Garden Development Program. A producer can receive a grant if he grows two or more acres, but this grant must be applied for before or by July 1st of the

year in which the grant is available. Also tell him how much money it could mean to him and his family. If he participates all summer, he could gross $8,000.00 or more. Consult your DA for more information.

If you are looking for producers — look to your local hotricultural society, your agricultural society, the 4-H clubs, the senior citizens' homes, etc. Any group is a prospective supplier.

After you have done the necessary leg-work, call a **meeting**. Make phone calls and announce it in your local paper with a big ad, telling all the reasons why it's a good idea. (Alberta Agriculture may offer financial and other assistance.) Get everyone together and get a firm commitment. Buy your seeds in bulk, for a discount. Make sure that not everyone will be supplying the same thing. After your meeting keep your producers happy by keeping them informed, perhaps with a newsletter. Explain what facilities will be available (refrigeration, a place to clean the produce, how much space allotted, how much a stall will cost, what others are producing, etc.).

THE WAY TO SUCCESS

There are many different ways to be successful and a grower-retailer has to adapt to his own personality, ability and needs. It is important to remember that the warm atmosphere and friendly service you offer is what differentiates you from the impersonal supermarket. This is exemplified by a sign put up at one farmers' market which read "Everything fresh daily except the help".

Clientele are your mosh valuable asset and a precious possession. They will return year after year if you treat them fairly, give them good value for their money and do so pleasantly. You will find that keeping old customers happy is much more important than getting new ones.

Surveys have shown that consumers who shop at roadside or farmers' markets have certain expectations:

Produce — They expect produce to be fresher than at the supermarket. They also expect the variety available to be a good one and harvested close to optimum maturity, thah is of good quality. Produce should also havs a good appearance — properly trimmed, washed, attractively displayed and **very plainly marked.** The consumer also expects to be able to buy the amount she needs and appropriate containers must be supplied. As far as price is concerned, the consumer expects a reasonable price but not necessarily a low one (See separate section on prices).

Personnel — People expect to see and visit with the farmer or his wife. The sales person should have a pleasant personality and be neat, clean, well-groomed and polite. He should provide prompt service and continuously restock and straighten displays.

In order to be a success you must like to visit with people, talk to them and tell them a little about your product. Ask your customer what she plans to do with the purchase. You must be willing to serve and have a sensitivity to the consumer's needs. You must take pride in what you have for sale and must make friends easily.

Remember that you are dealing with people. Recognize that the human elements have different objectives. You, as seller, want to dispose of your products at profitable prices. The buyer on the other hand wants to buy quality products at reasonable price. Understand your customer and you will be able to serve him better.

PRICING

Customers don't like to have to ask the price of an item. It embarrasses them if they decide not buy, and they wonder if everyone who asks is told a different price. Knowing the price gives them time to choose and decide. **Mark prices** clearly and understandably on all goods.

5¢ multiples are apparently preferred by most consumers, especially at farmers' markets, eg. 2/25, 15 ¢ each. This system seems less commercial to most people.

Be aware of local prices, and try to inspire confidence by sticking to one price all season.

Customers aren't looking for a good price alone; too low prices make people wary. Most people are really shopping for quality, freshness, and enjoying the fresh air, the seller's personality, and the atmosphere.

If you're selling **different qualities** of one item, offer them at different prices. This gives the customer a choice and the feeling of getting his money's worth. Few stallholders receive complaints about price — quality however is very important to them. It's worthwhile to ensure the bottom of a basket looks just as good as the top.

Customers are usually willing to pay more for top quality goods. Quality, wholesale price, and retail price should all be considered when you set a price or change one.

Merchants **change prices** to move stock, promote sales, and attract the impulse buyer. If you plan on changing prices, be aware what sales volume is needed to maintain the same profit. This table is a guide to price changes in relation to profit:

Price Cut	Necessary Sales Increase
3%	13.6%
5%	25%

Price Increase	Amount Less Sales Needed
3%	90%
5%	83.5%

MARKET CALENDAR

The following lists crops that might be available for marketing during each month. Marketing periods could be considerably shorter in some areas. The chart also assumes that maximum use is made of successive seeding, transplanting, hot caps, and varieties differing in maturity.

May —
Asparagus in last part of the month

June —
Last part of the month.
strawberries
rhubarb
peas
lettuce
radishes

July —
Throughout the month
strawberries
broccoli
peas
raspberries
lettuce
radishes
rhubarb
green onions

Towards the end of the month.
beans
corn
summer squash
cabbage
cucumbers
some tomatoes
carrots
potatoes

August —
Throughout the month.
strawberries
cabbage
corn
green onions
potatoes
rutabagas
beans
carrots
cucumbers
peas
summer squash
broccoli
cauliflower
lettuce
peppers
tomatoes

Towards the end of the month.
apples
winter squash
celery
pumpkins
cooking onions

Declining towards mid-month.
raspberries
rhubarb

September —
apples
brussels sprouts
cauliflower
cooking onions
potatoes
summer squash
rutabagas
beans
cabbage
celery
lettuce
winter squash
radishes
broccoli
carrots
cucumbers
peppers
pumpkins
tomatoes

Some available from storage only if harvested before frost.

Ending with frost.
*strawberries
peas
corn
green onions

October — Still being harvested.
brussels sprouts
onions
cabbage
potatoes
carrots
rutabagas

From storage only.
apples
winter squash
radishes
cauliflower
pumpkin
tomatoes
celery
summer squash

NOVEMBER —
Available from storage throughout the month.
cabbage
potatoes
rutabagas
carrots
winter squash
onions
pumpkins

Cleared from storage by mid-month.
cauliflower
celery (to Christmas under ideal conditions)

December —
Available from storage
cabbage
potatoes
rutabagas
carrots
winter pumpkin
onions
winter squash

***January, February and March —**

*Vegetables stored past February usually require refrigerated and humidified storage. Potatoes and rutabagas will store past February in well-ventilated and well-managed root cellars.

CHOOSING PRODUCTS FOR SALE

Stallholders can offer many products for sale especially fruit, vegetables, and bedding plants, since they are ready for market at different times. Make successive plantings to ensure a consistent supply of each product throughout the season.

In other places these are some of the most popular items,

Fruit — strawberries, raspberries, rhubarb, melons, cantaloupes, fruit juices, small fruits (blueberries, saskatoons, gooseberries, pincherries), other special fruits and vegetables

Vegetables — corn, tomatoes, beans, potatoes, (the highest volume), and many others.

Other produce — eggs, honey, dairy products (pasteurized only), sausage, smoked hams, poultry (undrawn), and possible red meats.

Prepared products — jams, jellies, pies, cakes, pickles, relishes, applesauce, apple butter, syrup, candy, cheese (pasteurized), vinegar, candied popcorn, molasses, decorated pumpkins, sauerkraut, cabbage rolls, perogies, bags of cereal crops (peas, beans, etc.)

Greenhouse items — fresh flowers, nursery stock, bedding plants, native fruit trees.

Plan on featuring one specialitty. Cider, fruit juice and home made candy are all popular. If you feature a prepared product like caramel apples, turn it into a display — let customers watch the staff making them.

Most successful stalls sell less than 25% **non-produce merchandise**. However, there are many possibilities for selling handicrafts and art at a farmers' market stall. Nearly anything the rural area can produce will sell. Antiques, books, ceramics, leather-crafts and copperwork are all popular. Other ideas might be quilts, doll clothes, embroidery, woodwork, paintings and engravings, weaving, knitting, and macrame. Hand painted Easter eggs or Christmas wreaths are favourites in season.

Firewood, charcoal, and picnic supplies might be successful for some stallholders. If nursery stock is being sold, garden supplies such as tools, fertilizer and seeds may be well received too. In the fall, canning supplies, gourds, Indian corn. In winter, Christmas trees.

It's best to divide items for sale into separate areas. Divisions might be: fresh produce; prepared products, eg. jellies, pickles; handicrafts; artwork; areas for club displays, eg. lapidary and for residents of nursing or senior citizen residences or ethnic groups.

MERCHANDISING

Through mass media advertising, you can pull people into the farmers' market from the outside. Once they are there, however, you must also push from the inside with point-of-purchase selling. One type of advertising without the other is wasteful. Display materials help remind the shopper of her needs and create new wants, so that she will buy on impulse. This is merchandising. Surveys show that 80% of your produce will be sold by impulse; so display together items which have a similar use in the home, and keep related items near demand items.

There are only seven demand items at the farmers' market. These are potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, head lettuce, carrots, corn, and an in-season fruit. Consider featuring a recipe (for example, slaw ~~cabbage~~) and keeping all the ingredients together. In the latter case you might consider selling a home-made dressing. A large variety of produce is essential to build total farmers' market traffic, but does very little to increase profit. Surveys have shown that the most money is made on the seven demand items.

Farm-like, open bulk displays sell the most. They seem to convince the buyer that the produce is better and fresher; and that is what they are willing to pay for. The produce should be piled high so that ths customer almost has to trip over it. For crushable items, where bulk displays would not be advisable, a step-type counter has prove highly effective.

The best displays have eye appeal. That is , they are clean, fresh, have interesting variety, and contrasting color. The best displays also reflect good management. The demand items are well spaced; there are containers for small items and point of purchase information. They make shopping easy by providing product identification, price tags, highlighted specials, and related items grouped together. Management of your display space is the key to profit.

Let's talk a minute about **quality**. Maintaining top quality produce is one of your biggest jobs. You might consider classifying produce by size, quality, or color, or all three. Although this is not strictly speaking grading, it aids the consumer. Some produce such as corn, peas, and berries spoil much faster than others. In such cases refrigeration can increase the sellable time up to 10 times. Some unripe produce like melons and tomatoes should not be refrigerated, as this results in a lack of flavor which never has a chance to properly develop. To keep themakingsof a salad looking fresh, bring a sprinkling can along and every time all the water evaporates, give it another sprinkle, or use chipped ice as a bed and sprinkle it on top.

COLOR AND LIGHT IN DISPLAYS

Careful use of color adds appeal to your merchandise, and greatly increases impulse buying.

Complementary colors can be used effectively on signs and displays for visual impact — for example, bright red lettering on a pale green sign is highly visible.

After-vision is important. If you look at one pure color for any length of time, then glance at another object, there's a residual after-vision opposite in color to the first one. That's why meat doesn't look fresh against light yellow walls — the after-vision of yellow is purple-blue — not an attractive color for meat! The solution is to paint the walls pale green, since the after-vision of green is red.

Arrange produce so complementary colors are next to each other. Red tomatoes are good next to lettuce, bananas next to purple produce like red cabbage, green pears near apples, etc.

Warm and cool colors have a definite effect on people — and on their buying habits. For hot midsummer days, use cool, pale colors on your walls. Any area the customer will touch should be a light color so it will reflect heat and not absorb it. For large areas, use light colors for a clean, fresh, cool appearance. Avoid dark or hot colors, which make things seem heavy, smaller, hot, or unduly distracting.

Neutral colors, off-whites and beiges, are safest. Other colors used as accents against a neutral background are effective.

Don't overlook texture of walls and displays. Shiny, hard, smooth surfaces look modern and commercial, and this isn't what most customers want to see ah a farmers' market. Old barn doors, salvaged barn wood, exposed beams, all draw a good response.

Lighting of your display area is important, since different types of lighting give very different effects. Fluorescent light contains more blue than sunlight, and incandescent light contains more red. The color of an object is only visible under a light that contains that color. Choose lighting, therefore, with the colors of your produce in mind. A cool beam which reflects heat up, instead of down onto the produce, is also recommended.

Make the best of your sales area and of your produce, by choosing lighting and background colors carefully.

DISPLAY METHODS FOR VARIOUS VEGETABLES*

Green Leafy Vegetables:

Broccoli: Display upright or on its side in a single layer. Be very careful about stacking, because flowers damage easily. Pick up by the stem.

Brussels sprouts: Display in individual boxes.

Cabbage: Do not stack too high or handle carelessly, causing injury to the leaves. Cabbage can be displayed either with the stem end up or down; however, from standpoint of consumer handling, fewer leaves are torn off when displayed stem end up.

Cauliflower: Stacking is undesirable because the flowerets damage easily. Pick up by stem and not by the flower. Display with the stem end down.

Celery: Display horizontally with butts pointing in same general direction. Do not stack up with butts towards the customer. Customers pulling out lower layers not only damage the stalks, but disarrange practically every other stalk of celery in the display. Rubber bands around the bunch reduce the stalk damage.

Lettuce: Display with the stem end up. This reduces consumer damage, because in order to pick up a head of lettuce or reach in for a head in a lower layer the consumer is forced to take hold of the part where the leaves are anchored. Losses through loose leaf damage are greatly reduced. Large rubber bands may help to hold leaves together.

Spinach and other greens: Display to show the leaves. Do not pack down, as this injures the leaves and causes discoloration. It is better to replenish more frequently than to overload the display.

Upright or Bush Vegetables:

Green beans: Do not overload display. Although quite hardy, all snap beans are susceptible to bruising. Display in baskets or separate compartment to keep beans from mixing with other commodities.

Lima beans: Handle in pods like snap beans. Sell shelled lima beans in unit containers.

Eggplant: High stacking is not recommended. Hard surfaces, sharp projections, or corners, damage the vegetable.

Corn: Do not overload display. Frequent replenishment indicates rapid turn-over and freshness. Bulk displays with self-service creates customer activity and can attract more customers.

Peas: Display and handpe like lima beans.

Peppers: Do not overload or stack display to cause peppers to roll onto the floor. A broken or damaged pepper might as well be marked off as a total loss.

Tomatoes: Do not use large containers for fully ripened tomatoes. The lower layers will be damaged.

Root Vegetables:

Carrots, beets, radishes, turnips (with tops): Lay bunches horizontally and parallel to the front of the rack with tops in the same general direction to form a ribbontype display across the rack. Damage by consumers is reduced if they are able to pick up and inspect the tops and roots for freshness. Carrot-root separation from the tops is prevented if a rubber band is wrapped around the bunch to hold the carrots snugly together. Prepackaging of topped root crops is increasing. Display topless root vegetables in containers to keep from getting mixed with other produce.

***Reference: "Marketips", D.L. Hine, District Extension Agent, Marketing, P.O. Box 219, Wayne, Michigan**

AIDS TO SELLING & CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Make full use of price tags, labels, and display signs. This frees the salesman to spend more time answering questions on preparatiCn, cooking time, canning or freezing methods, etc.

To increase sales of a specific item, for example cookinv apples, display a real apple pie, a good colour photo, or a pie recipe. Consider a display of all the ingredients for a tossed or Ceasar salad, featuring a selection of home-made dressings.

Display information about nutritional value of foods, for example the importance of vitamin C, in peppers, cauliflower, cabbage, and strawberries. (They all contain more than oranges do.) Learn a bit about the nutritive value of the foods you sell, and encourage your staff to do the same. Consider inexpensive handouts on topics of nutrition, storage

and preparation of major products. Tell customers what they can do to cut food costs — eat more fresh fruit and vegetables, home canning and freezing, eat a little less, buy from growers at farm or market, avoid fancy packages, etc. You can get this information from the Department of Agriculture.

Be well informed about your produce. Customers often want to know what varieties you have, what varieties are suitable for different purposes, and preparation suggestions. Make your recommendations personal — be happy, colourful, complimentary. While you ring up the purchase, tell the customer how to look after the purchase, and what variety it is, or take an interest in his plans for it.

CONSUMERS ARE BETTER INFORMED TODAY AND EXPECT QUALITY. If it's been a bad year for one type of produce, tell your customers about it, and explain why, if possible. Don't hesitate to give samples.

Explain packaging differences, too. For example potatoes are packed in opaque plastic bags to prevent greening.

If you can make the customer's shopping experience at your market interesting, informative, or amusing, as well as selling him quality produce, he'll return over and over again!

REFRIGERATION

Refrigeration during storage is particularly important for quality control as is humidity. If you have refrigeration facilities available remember that when bringing produce from the cold to the outside, sweating results and this speeds up spoilage. Without refrigeration, keep temperature of your produce down by good ventilation and no direct exposure to sunlight.

Most produce like the humidity as high as possible, 95 percent; except dry onions, squash and pumpkins,etc., which are 75 percent. Humidity can be increased in your display by using crushed ice, or sprinkling with water periodically, but remember do not wet the leaves of such vegetables as radishes, beets, green onions and carrots. These should really be refrigerated. See the chart below for best holding temperatures.

SUGGESTED HOLDING TEMPERATURES FOR FRUITS, FLOWERS AND VEGETABLES

Old Room
35-40•F.

apple
asparagus
beans (snap 40-50°)
berries
broccoli
cabbage
cauliflower
celery
cherry
cut flowers
lettuce
lima beans
onion (green)
peas
plum
potato (40-50°)
raspberry
rhubarb
root crops
spinach
strawberry
sweet corn

Cool Room
55-60•F.

cucumber
eggplant
muskmelonpepper
pumpkin
squash
tomatoes
watermelon

Cucumbers, peppers, watermelon, squash and **fully ripened** melons and tomatoes can be held at lower temperatures (45-50° F.) for a **few days**without injury. Too often these products are stored too cold and suffer from temperature injury.

TRANSPLANTING

Some crops will require starting early and transplanting in order to mature before frosts. Other crops are desirable to start early in order to get "first" product on the market. Early products usually get premium prices.

Following are crops that can or should be transplanted. Some dates are provided. However, use past experience in the growing area as the best guide.

Cabbage

Start April 15. Field set from May 15 to 25.

Broccoli and **Cauliflower**

Same as Cabbage.

Brussels Sprouts

Start Mar. 1-15. Transplant after any danger of prolonged temperatures below 13°C.

Celery

Start March 1-10. Transplant after any danger of prolonged temperatures below 10°C.

Cucumbers

Seed in individual pots to prevent root damage. Large scale generally not practical.

Lettuce

Start about April 15. Field set about May 15.

Onions

Start about April 15. Field set May 15.

Tomatoes

Start from April 1 to 15. Field set from May 15 to June 10 in most areas.

Other crops can be started early and transplanted such as garlic cloves, leek, peppers and eggplant.

*** See Alberta Market Garden Growers' Guide for more detailed information.**

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS: USE AND SEED VARIETIES AVAILABLE

Rhubarb

Grows well in rich, deeply worked soil. Do not plant where water will collect. Plant roots with one or more buds in April or May. Harvest when plant is two years old.

*Canada Red (R)
*Macdonald (Pike, ANS, R)
*Ruby

Rutabaga (Swede Turnip)

Grows well in soil with low alkali content. Needs watering. Harvest after several light frosts, since frost improves the flavor.

Purple Top — +Altasweet (ST)
+Laurentian (Pike, McF, SC, ANS, R, ST)

Spinach

*America (ANS, ST)
*Bloomsdale (Pike, SC, McF, R, ST)
Special Tyeps — New Zealand — grows continually after tips are picked. (SC, McF, Pike, R, ST) Orach

Squash

Most varieties must be thoroughly ripe before harvesting.

Summer — Blackini (Pike, SC)
Straightneck (ST)
Zucchini (McF, R, ST)
Ambassador
Winter (Small) — Buttercup (McF, ANS, Pike, ST)
Butternut (McF, ANS, ST)
Golden Delicious (ST)
Golden Nugget (McF, ST)
Table Queen Acorn (Pike, ANS, McF, R, ST)
Sweet Meat
Winter (Large) — Hubbard (blue, golden or green) (Pike, ANS, SC, McF, R, ST)

Swiss Chard

Leaves used for salad and vegetable greens.

Lucullus (Pike, SC)
Rhubarb (Pike, ANS, McF, ST)

Tomatoes

Start indoors and transplant about June 10. If using paper protectors, transplant about May 25. Satisfactory in Zones 2A, 2B, 3A; worthy of trial in other zones.

Determinate (non-stalking) — Early Fireball (ST)
Rocket (ANS, ST)
Brookpact
Earlicrop
Red Bobs
Indeterminate (stalking and pruning) — Hybrid Red No. 22

Watermelon

Start indoors before mid-May in individual containers to protect roots. Transplant under hot caps in early June. Worthy of trial in Zones 2A, 2B and 3.

Early Canada (Pike, McF, SC, ANS, ST)
New Hampshire Midget (McF, ANS)
Peerless (ST)
Sweet Sensation

Guide to Abbreviations and Symbols

* Suitable for freezing
+ Suitable for storage
ANS Alberta Nurseries and Seeds Ltd., Bowden, Alberta
BL Beaverlodge Nurseries, Beaverlodge, Alberta
McF McFayden Seeds, Box 1600, Brandon, Manitoba
R Robertson Seeds, 8118-103 St., Edmonton, Alberta
P Pike & Co. Ltd., 10039-101A Ave., Edmonton, Alberta
SC Seed Centre Ltd., Box 3867, Edmonton, Alberta
ST Stokes Seeds Ltd., Box 10, St. Catherine's, Ontario.

These catalogues were available at the time of assembling the kit. Other sees companies can provide these varieties and Stokes, in particular, has a large selection.

Muskmelon

Start indoors before mid-May in individual containers. Transplant in early June, using hot caps.

Burpee Hybrid (ST)
Honey Rock (ST)
Gold Star
Main Rock
Supermarket

Onion

Rich firm sandy loam is best. Seed early, start indoors, or grow from sets.

Yellow — +Autumn Spice (ANS, McF, Pike, R, ST)
+Fiesta (McF, ST)
+Hybrid #9A
+Hybrid 42
+Pacesetter
+Pilot
+Yellow Globe Danvers (McF, Pike, SC, ANS, P)
Red — +Red Wethersfield (SC, ANS, Pike, R)
+Minnesota Globe
White — +Southport White Globe (ST)
Pickling — White Barletta (ANS, Pike)
White Pearl (SC)
Perennial — Multipliers (Pike, ANS, SC, ST)
Shallots (ANS, Pike, SC)
White Welsh (ANS)
Evergreen Bunching (Pike)
He-Shi-Ko

Parsley

Used fresh or chopped and dried. Can be potted in September for indoor use during winter.

Leaf — leaves are used for garnish
Campion Moss Curled (Pike, SC, R, St)
Dark Moss Triple Curled (McF)
Root — root resembles a small parsnip and is edible. Leaves used for garnish when mature.
Hamburg (Pike, McF, ANS, SC, R, ST)

Parsnip
Very fine seeds. Do not seed on a windy day. Grows best in a site protected from wind erosion. Harvest as needed until frost makes digging difficult. Freezing improves flavor. Seed early, with a few early radish seeds mixed in to identify row.
+All-American (Pike, SC)
+Harris Model (ANS, ST)
+Hollow Crown (Pike, SC, ANS, McF, R, ST)

Peas (Green)
For continuing supply, plant some peas each week after May 1. Seeds do not germinate until well in summer heat, so soak in a damp rolled towel at 45 degrees until they germinate. Plant in moist soil.
Early — Laxton's Progress (SC, Pike, ST)
*Little Marvel (Pike, McF, SC, ANS, R, ST)
*Progress Number 9 (McF, ANS)
*Jade
Mid-season — *Lincoln (Homesteader) (Pike, McF, SC, ANS, R, ST)
*Small Sieve Freezer
Late — *Telephone, dwarf or tall (Pike, McF, ANS, SC, R, ST)
*Dark Skinned Perfection

Peas (Dry)
Seed near May 1. 2" - 4" apart. One pound.
Dashaway (also used as a shell pea when ripe) (ANS)
Early Blue

Pepper
Start indoors to allow sufficient ripening time. Generally unsuitable in Zones 5 and 6.
Hot — Hungarian Yellow Wax (ANS, ST)
Long Red Cayenne (McF, ST)
Red Cherry (ANS, ST)
Sweet — Castle (ST)
Early California Wonder (Pike, McF, SC, ST)
Yolo Wonder (ST)
Sunnybrook
Delaware Belle

Potatoes
Plant in mid-May using sets with two or three eyes. 10" - 15" apart. 10 pounds. Hill in mid-August to prevent greening.
Early — Norland (Red) (Pike, R, ST)
Warba (Pike, R)
Viking (Red)
Main crop — +Irish Cobbler (ST)
+Netted Gem (Pike, ANS, R) requires irrigation in dry zones 2A, 2B, and 3.
Pontiac
Kennebec

Pumpkin
Must be thoroughly ripe when harvested.
Jack O'Lantern (McF, ANS, ST)
Spookie (ST)
Sugar (Pike, McF, ANS, SC, R, ST)

Radish
Comet (ANS, ST)
Scarlet Globe (Pike, SC, R, ST)
Stoplight (ST)
Champion

Asparagus
Seeds — *Mary Washington (Pike, McF, ST)
*Viking (McF, SC, R, ST)
Roots — *Viking rust resistant (SC)

Broad Beans
Cool moist weather necessary (in warm weather pods won't fill). Harvest when almost full grown, but not ripe. Shell and cook like green peas.
*Broad Windsor — Upright plants, used as a shell bean in green stages. (McF, Pike, SC, ANS, R)

Bush Beans (Snap Beans)
Require warm weather.
Green — *Bush Blue Lake (ANS, Pike)
*Executive (ST)
*Tendercrop (ST)
*Topcrop (ANS, SC, McF, ST)
*Greenpod 478
Yellow (or Wax)— *Eastern Butter Wax (McF, ST)
*Puregold (ANS)
*Top Notch Golden Wax (McF)
*Midas

Pole Beans
Require warm weather. Grow on stake or wire supports. Zones 2A and 2B.
*Blue Lake — Vigorous climbers, resistant to bacterial bean blight. Widely used for canning and freezing. (Pike, ST)
*Kentucky Wonder — Keeps on producing when well picked. Should be eaten when young. (ANS, SC, Pike, McF, R, ST)

Shell or Dry Beans
Require warm weather. Seed after May 20. 3" - 4" apart. 6-8 ounces.
Burbank
Sanilac
Seafarer

Beets
Seed early.
Garnet — (ST)
+Red Pak — (ST)
+Ruby Queen — (ANS, McF, SC, ST)
+Vermilion — (ST)

Broccoli
Used fresh, canned or frozen. Cut the large clusters of dark-green flower buds before they flower, with about 3" of stem. More clusters then develop. Seed early or start indoors.
*Green Comet — (ST) Imp.
*Harvester — single stemmed, reduce spacing.

Brussel Sprouts
Small cabbage-like heads develop first on lower stalk of plant. Develop best in cool moist weaher, but will do well if watered regularly. Seed early or start indoors.
*Jade Cross — extremely early, large crop. (ANS, McF, ST)

Cabbage
Grows well on fertile well drained soil. Avoid sandy soil, and heavy soils with poor drainage or alkali. Needs extra water in Southern Alberta.
Early — Golden Acre (SC, Pike, McF, R, ST)
Stokes Early Hybrid (ST)
Head Start
Market Dawn
Pacesetter
Midget types worthy of trial.
Mid-season — Bonanza (SC, R, ST)
Copenhagen Maret (McF, Pike, SC, ANS, R, ST)
Glory of Enkhuizen (Pike, ANS)
Resistant Danish
Late — *+Autumn Marvel (ST)*
+Danish Ballhead (ANS, Pike, McF, R)
+Evergreen Ballhead (ST)
+Storage Green (ST)
Savoy — curly leaved.
Chieftain (McF, SC, R, ST)
Perfection Drumhead
U-Neek
Vanguard II
Red — Red Acre (ANS, SC, ST)
Red Debut
Red Pickling

Carrots
Grows best in deeply-tilled, sandy soil. Rich fibrous soil may produce forked and split roots. Best size is diameter up to one inch. Canned, fresh, frozen adn/or stored.
Early — *Nantes (McF, SC, Pike, ANS, R, ST)
*Touchon Coreless (McF, Pike, ST)
Late (Storage) — +Chantenay, Red Cored or Royal (McF, Pike, SC, R, ST)
+Gold Pak (ANS, SC, R, ST)
+Imperator II (McF, Pike)
+Imperator 58 (McF, Pike, ST)
Hicolor 9
Baby — Baby Fingers (ST)
Gourmet
Miniature
Sucram Sweet

Cauliflower
Needs fertile heavy loam soil and adequate watering. When heads develop, they should be blanched by tying up leaves to cover them.
White — *Dwarf Erfurt (Pike, ANS)
*Igloo (ST)
*Snowball (McF, Pike, SC, ANS, R)
*Imperial
*White Beauty
Purple — *Royal Purple

Celery
Much or peat is the best soil. May need supplementary boron.
Utah 52-70 (McF, Pike, ANS, SC, R, ST)

Chinese Cabbage
Seed in late June, 6" - 8" apart. One packet.
Spring Time Hybrid (ST)
Summer Time Hybrid (ST)

Corn (Sweet)
Most soil types (well-drained sandy-loam soils best for early maturity). Easily killed by frost, and seriously injured by prolonged temperatures just above freezing. Easy to grow, and extremely perishable after harvesting. For earlier harvest transplant from indoors.
Earliest — Polar Vee — very early, but can't be shipped. Not the best appearance. (McF, ST)
Early — Butter Vee (ST)
Seneca Explorer (ST) Worthy of trial in 5, 5B, 5C, 6B.
Seneca 60 (McF, SC, ST) Trial 5B, not recommended 6B.
Sunny Vee (McF, Pike, ANS, SC, ST) Trial 5B, 6B.
Mid-season — not recommended for 5, 5B, 5C, 6B.
Golden Beauty (McF, ST)
Market Beauty (McF)
Seneca Golden
Sunchief A
Late — not recommended for 3, 3A, 5, 5B, 5C, 6B. Trial 2C.
Mellogold
Queen Anne

Cucumber
Warm location away from cold winds necessary. Use plant protectors, either paper tents or plastic sheeting. For early crop, transplant from indoors. If transplanting, use individual peat pots — very sensitive to root damage. Generally suitable in Zones 2A, 2B, 2C, 3 and 3A. Worthy of trial in other zones.
Slicing — High Mark II (ST)
Marketer (ST)
Meridian (ST)
Burpless #26
Pickling — Spartan Dawn (ANS, SC, Pike, ST)
Briney
Hybrid 8GND
Piknik

Eggplant
Must be transplanted from indoors to ensure proper ripening time.
Black Beauty (SC, Pike McF)
Early Black Oval

Kale
Seed early, 18" - 20" apart. ¼ ounce.
Dwarf Green Curled (SC, ST)
Tall Green Curled

Kohlrabi
Also known as turnip-rooted cabbage. Seed early or start indoors.
Early Purple Vienna (McF, Pike, SC, R, ST)
Early White Vienna (Pike, SC, R, ST)

Leek
Unsatisfactory in Zones 5, 5B, and 6B.
+Large Carentan
+Siberia
+Unique (ST)

Lettuce
Rich, well-worked soil is best. If birds destroy early lettuce, hang fly screen or glittering bangles. Seed early or start indoors.
Crisp-head — Fulton (ST)
Great Lakes (McF, Pike, ANS, ST)
Imperial (ANS, SC, Pike, R, ST)
Minetto (ST)
Oswego
Sunblest
Butterhead — Buttercrunch (McF, SC, Pike, ANS, R, ST)
Butter King (ST)
White Boston (ST)
Cos — Paris White (McF)
Leaf — Grand Rapids (Sc, ANS, Salad Bowl (McF)

ASPARAGUS

Storage
Cool as soon as possible after harvest to near 0° C. A highly perishable crop. Much quality is lost in one hour at 27° C as in 14 hours at 2.2° C. Hydro-cooling is the most effective way of reducing field heat immediately.

Marketing
Asparagus spears should be straight, green, possibly tinged with purple on the bracts, and tips tightly closed. The easier they are to snap, the more tender they are. They should snap before they are bent to a 90° angle.
— spears should be round, not flattened. Woodiness indicates old age. Diameter of spears has little relation to tenderness. Generally, spears less than one inch in diameter at the base are considered undesirably thin.
— display — asparagus should be kept moist and under refrigeration if possible. Next best is crushed ice and regular sprinklings of water. Do not set spears in water. This results in loss of sugars and vitamins and increases bacterial growth.

Consumer Information
1) A cup of cooked asparagus provides:
2/3 recommended daily allowance of Vit. C
1/3 of the Vit. A
1/10 of the iron
2) store in plastic bags in the refrigeration until it is used.
3) Use as soon as possible after purchase.

SWEET CORN

Storage
Storage is very important with corn as it begins to deteriorate 20 minutes after picking. Chill the corn as quickly as possible to at lesat 5° C and as low as 0° C until it is sold. It can only be stored for a few days at most, even at 0° C. After 4 days there is a 20% sugar loss.

Marketing
— High quality sweet corn is one of the major factors in the success of farmers' markets. Customers expect nothing but the best when they buy corn directly from the producer.
— Corn should have a well-filled cob with light milky kernels that are just firm enough to offer slight resistance to pressure. Spray with water or store on ice to prevent injury from heat.
— Bulk displays sell more corn than any other method. A large bin from which customers can pick their own is the easiest way to handle the product.
— Have a few stripped ears on display and discourage people from stripping their own. The display will quickly look unattractive if everyone begins to pull the husks off.
— Advertising catch words "farm fresh," "well-filled ears," "plump milky kernels," "melt in your mouth," "excellent for boiling or roasting," "makes a barbecue complete."

Consumer Education
Refrigerate corn if it is not going to be cooked immediately. Buy only as much as you need and will use quickly. Cook in coiling water for 3 to 4 minutes for small ears and 5 to 6 minutes for large ears. Also can be roasted in the husks. Pull off outer husks leaving a few inner layers. Place on the grill for about 10 minutes. Some soak ears in salt water first. Turn over often during roasting. Foil roasted corn is another method. Pull back husks, remove silks, brush with butter, add seasonings, replace husks, wrap in foil and roast for about 25 minutes.

POTATOES

Storage
— Most late or main crop varieties store reasonably well (early and midseason varieties can also be stored but should not be grown for this purpose).
— Potatoes intended for storage should be cured first at 15.6°-20.1° and 95%

R.H. for ten to fourteen days. After this they may be held at 7-10° for a short storage time or around 40° for a long (four to nine months6 storage.

-- Netted Gem is the best storage variety. Ideally it should be stored ah 5° to 7°
C. and 95% R.H. with continuous air exchange. A basement storage room specifically designed is the most ideal for home storage.

— Do not store potatoes in the light. Do not store potatoes in plastic bags.

Marketing

— Potatoes are one of the biggest demand items, so use them to direct traffic in your market. If you plan to prepackage, consider 5, 10, 25 and 75 pound bags. If you plan bulk display, have containers of approximately this size available.

— Sell by variety, and perhaps by grade. Some of the baking varieties are sold by the piece. New potatoes must be handled carefully because they don't have a good skin yet.

CONSUMER INFORMATION

— Provide consumers with information on storage and on varieties so they use the right variety for a specific use. See table below:

VARIETY	SEASON	BAKING	BOILING	CHIPS	FRYING
Norland	Aug.1 to Dec. 15	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Viking	Aug. 8 to Dec. 20	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Netted Gem	Sept. 1 tm early spring	Excellent	Poor	Good	Good
Irish Cobbler	July 25 to Aug. 10	Good	Excellent	Good	Good
Kennebec	Aug. 10 to late winter	Good	Good	Good	Good

TOMATOES

Storage

Fully ripe tomatoes should be sold as quickly as possible. They can not be stored for longer periods than 3-5 days at 10° C. However, mature tomatoes that are not fully ripe can be stored for 8-12 days at 10° C. If temperatures are lower than this the fruit begins to break down. Do not store mature green fruit at 10° C. for any length of time. If kept at 12.8° C. however, ripening will continue at a slow rate and fruit will remain saleable from 5-6 weeks.

Marketing

— Tomatoes should be mature but not over ripe. Sell the tomatoes with growth cracks the day they are picked. They tend to spoil more quickly. Handle as little as possible since all tomatoes are delicate and bruise easily.

— Displays — do not pile tomatoes to any depth, because the fruit in the lower levels will bruise. It helps to cushion tomatoes on some rubber or grass mat, preferrably green in color.

— Remove decaying or discolored fruit immediately.

— Novelty tomatoes such as Tiny Tims which can be sold in pint boxes are good sellers. They are ideal for salads or lunches and prices are good.

— Display tomatoes with other salad items such as cucumbers, radishes, peppers, lettuce, etc. making good use of color contrast to make a good display.

Consumer Information

— Tomatoes are rich in vitamins, particularly Vitamin C. Use words like "Vine Ripened", "Farm Fresh" and "Make your salad complete" above the produce.

— Encourage your customer to try canning tomatoes. Advise her on recipes and preservation information available through government information services.

— Mature greenish tomatoes hsould be kept at room temperature for a day or two to allow them to ripen. Keep tomatoes out of direct sunlight or scalding and uneven coloring may occur. Fully ripe tomatoes should be used at once or stored only for a day or two in the refrigerator.

— Tomatoes should be cut or peeled just before using for best flavor. Peeling can be done after dipping the tomato in boiling water for 1 minute and cooling immediately in cold water. Another method is stroking the skin with the dull edge of a knife until the skin loosens.

STRAWBERRIES

Storage

Strawberries are very perishable. They must be removed from the field to the cooler immediately.

Marketing

Display prices prominently and induce volume sales by having large (8 quart) containers available.

— Also consider selling cull strawberries in the form of strawberry jams or jellies. Most popularly put up in old-fashioned jars, perhaps with your own label.

Consumer Information

Wash berries gently in cold water and then dry them for storage. Small berries are best for freezing. A berry that is 75 percent red will ripen in one day at room temperature and should not be refrigerated until ripe. Don't freeze over-ripe berries as off-flavors often result.

PUMPKINS

Storage

Pumpkins should be stored at 10-12.8°C. and a relative humidity of 50-75 percent. Lower temperatures result in decay and higher temperatures may produce stringiness and undesirable color changes.

Marketing

Every farmers' market should have pumpkins, squash, and probably gourds on display starting the end of September through the whole month of October.

This provides color and excitement for the Thanksgiving and Halloween trade.

— Massive displays sell the most pumpkins.

— Size pumpkins and price accordingly for maximum returns.

BEDDING PLANTS AND FLOWERS

Storage

Start with clean, green plants of good quality that are well hardened. Maintain this quality with regular watering, fertilizing, removing yellow leaves and dead blossoms, protecting from winds and keeping shade plants covered.

Marketing

— Bedding plants are good for early high volum sales. They extend the selling season and result in returning customers.

— Displays —— arrange on several levels if possible. Keep displays full and neat and off the ground where people can see them. (Snow fence on a 2 X 4 frame or a bricks and boards combination.) Use solid blocks of color.

— Have as many varieties as feasible availabl and keep good records so next year you can plan on increasing stock in your best sellers. Besides your regular small boxes, consider planting larger flats and trays. Also for apartment dwellers and others, ready-planted tubs, window boxes and hanging baskets. These, if kept in good condition, can be sold all summer long.

— Remember people buy what they can comfortably carry, so provide a large tray for them to carry to their car and keep newspapers on hand for their use in their cars.

Consumer Information

— Give good advice to your customer. Assist him to get the best results with your plants and he will come back next season. Advise on fertilizing and adding organic matter.

— If possible have a few specimens in later stages of development or a colored picture of the blossoms.

With so many different media to advertise in, one often wonders what is the most successful. Surveys have shown that successful Farmers' Markets use the following: newspaper and magazines, 78 percent; signs (including roadside display and signs on trucks), 67 percent; radio, 29 percent; novelty (including bags, inserts, balloons, pencils, calendars, matches, etc.), 12 percent; circulars and brochures, 10 percent; TV, 2 percent.

——**Newspapers** ——A small ad in the corner of the page which can be easily clipped out, is most successful. If there is any local point of interest near the market, use it in your newspaper advertisements. Weekly ads should highlite the specials and be sure you have enough product to back it up or you lose customers in the long run. Make sure there is something distinctive about your market that you can use in the ads.

Evaluate your local newspapers in this way; ask how many is the paid circulation in your trade area. Divide that number into the contemplated advertising cost. For example, 1000 homes, display ad costing $50 equals cost per home of 5 cents. Evaluate all the available papers on this basis and determine which is the most economical.

——**Radio**——Use radio advertisements for peak periods when there is one particular item available. Tell how to get to the market; tell of any special services that you offer. Most cars have a radio and spot announcements are the most economical, mostly 30 or 60 second spots.

—— Some tips on getting the most for your media dollar: give away free produce, and don't forget the women's section editor. Make sure there are plenty of people to take pictures of. Consider going up to your local radio or TV station with a carton of strawberries or something else in season. Leave them as a present. Chances are eventually they will give you an interview. Crown someone at the station "King something" for the day. This gives them a chance to do a human interest story. If you have something different for sale, call your local paper and they will probably do a story on it.

——**Signs** ——Two large billboard type signs half a mile away in each direction make good advertising sense. Be careful to give the proper farm-like impression. Signs should be colorful, neat, attractive, and brief. Remember they give the first impression of your market. Signs should contain such phrases as home-grown produce. Ideally they should have removable product slat signs for different items available at any given time. There also should be a "closed for the season" sign and a date indicating when business will be resumed. A sign, in order to be useable, should be at least 4 X 8 feet if not larger and should contain no more than 7 words. If you can use the roof of a building, use 7-foot high letters to proclaim the farmers' market, and remember signs are probably the least costly form of advertising.

—— **Bags** ——Bags are an easy and inexpensive way to advertise. They should be colorful, preferably with handles because people will buy what they can easily carry. These could be provided for all stall holders at the market and they could add their own rubber stamped name above the farmer market name. Few people can resist a sign beside a bin of produce providing empty bags which says, "All you can bag for so many cents".

—— **Handouts** ——A simple sheet of paper printed on both sides, one side telling costs, what will be available, maturity date, and a little about the operation so that people get a friendly farm image; on the back side a map telling how to get there. This should be put out just before the season begins and indicating the hours. This should be mailed everywhere.

The following is a list of some of the things successful farmers' markets have done to gain media coverage and visibility in their community: conduct school tours, lecture at garden clubs and schools, hold a special "day", for instance, a Strawberry Festival. Make a strawberry shortcake and sell it, and use it in your advertising. Sponsor a queen candidate or a bowling team. Have a booth at the local county fair. Offer special services, such as carrying packages to the car, free samples, drinking water, restrooms, picnic area, and children's play area. Offer recipe folders, cooking demonstrations. Offer hay rides and pony rides. Offer coloring books of the market for the kids. Offer free pumpkins at Halloween time with a purchase.

Send out a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter to customers and the media about what's going on at the market, and get your mailing list by having your customers sign their names to a pad of paper that is posted at the market.

One market got very original and made a grandma and grandpa stuffed out of straw with pumpkin heads sitting under a tree in a parking lot. These were wired for sound so that they could talk to the customers.

The Farmers' Market program of Alberta Agriculture offers a wealth of promotional material and ideas that are yours for the asking. Don't hesitate to call on them!